

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 07250 220927Z

ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 SSC-01 EB-07

TRSE-00 OMB-01 SS-15 NSC-05 /047 W

-----032823 221251Z /50

R 211650Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4546

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 7250

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IV

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND ON ABDOULAYE KONE:

NEW MINISTER OF ECONOMY, FINANCE AND PLAN

REF: ABIDJAN 7203

1. KONE'S MOVE FROM THE MINISTRY OF BUDGET TO THE TRIPLE PORTFOLIO OF ECONOMY, FINANCE AND PLAN MARKS THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW AND REMARKABLY YOUNG HEAVYWEIGHT ON THE IVORIAN POLITICAL SCENE. THE NEW MINISTRY, COMBINING KONE'S PREVIOUS FUNCTIONS WITH THOSE OF TWO OF IVORY COAST'S BEST KNOWN AND RESPECTED CABINET MEMBERS, WILL BE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE IN THE NEXT SEVERAL YEAR.

2. BORN APRIL 13, 1935 IN SEGUELA, KONE IS MUSLIM AND THOUGHT TO BE A MALINKE. HE RECEIVED HIS PRIMARY EDUCATION IN DALOA AND SEGUELA BETWEEN 1943 AND 1949 AND BEGAN HIS SECONDARY SCHOOLING AT THE COLLEGE MODERNE IN BINGERVILLE WHERE HE CONTINUED UNTIL 1953. IN THAT YEAR, KONE LEFT FOR FRANCE WHERE HE SPENT SEVERAL YEARS COMPLETING HIS SECONDARY EDUCATION, FIRST AT THE COLLEGE MODERNE DE BARBEZIEUX IN CHARENTE, AND LATER AT THE COLLEGE MODERNE DE CASTEL-SARRAZIN WHERE HE OBTAINED HIS BACCALAUREAT IN 1958.

3. HIS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING CONTINUED IN FRANCE AND IN
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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 07250 220927Z

1961 HE OBTAINED A LAW DEGREE AND ENTERED THE ECOLE NATIONALE DU ETRESOR IN PARIS. THERE FOLLOWS A YEAR OF PRACTICAL TRAINING IN THE TREASURY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CAEN BEFORE HIS RETURN TO IVORY COAST IN 1962.

4. KONE'S FIRST POSITION IN IVORY COAST WAS A FIVE-MONTH STINT AS AN INSPECTOR AT THE INSPECTION GENERALE DES

SERVICES FINANCIERS AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CONTROLE FINANCIER. FROM 1963-1967, HE WAS DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES IN BOUAKE. HIS NEXT POST WAS DIRECTOR OF BUDGET SPECIAL D'INVESTISSEMENT ET D'EQUIPMENT, A POST HE HELD UNTIL 1971 WHEN HE BECAME SECRETARY OF STATE FOR BUDGET UNDER THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND FINANCES. THIS POSITION WAS UPGRADED TO MINISTERIAL LEVEL IN 1976, REPORTEDLY AS PART OF AN EFFORT TO LIMIT THE POWER OF MINISTER KONAN BEDI, WHOM KONE HAS NOW REPLACED.

5. UNTIL THE 1976 CABINET RESHUFFLE, KONE WAS GENERALLY VIEWED AS A PROFESSIONALLY COMPETENT BUT SELF-EFFACING INDIVIDUAL SOMEWHAT IN THE SHADOW OF MINISTER BEDIA. PURPORTEDLY, HE HAD A DIFFICULT TIME BELIEVING HIS PROMOTION TO THE BUDGET POST IN 1971. IF THAT IS IN FACT THE CASE THE LATEST MILESTONE IN HIS CAREER MUST APPEAR AWESOME INDEED.

6. KONE HAS BEEN IN THE U.S. FOR WORLD BANK MEETINGS AND A THREE-MONTH TRAINING PROGRAM AT IBRD IN THE LATE 1960'S. HE APPEARS TO BE WELL DISPOSED TO THE UNITED STATES AND HAS BEEN RECEPTIVE AND QUITE HELPFUL TO AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN IN THE IVORY COAST. EMBASSY'S CONTACTS WITH HIM HAVE BEEN LIMITED, BUT HE IS OBVIOUSLY INTELLIGENT, ARTICULATE AND ENERGETIC. HE WILL NEED ALL THESE AND MORE IN HIS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. COOKE
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PAGE 03 ABIDJA 07250 220927Z

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, CABINET
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ABIDJA07250
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770262-0272
Format: TEL
From: ABIDJAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770735/aaaabedh.tel
Line Count: 94
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ABIDJAN 7203
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1796991
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND ON ABDOULAYE KONE: NEW MINISTER OF ECONOMY, FINANCE AND PLAN
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IV, (KONE, ABDOULAYE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/42f36d66-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009